
VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD

**Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy
Thursday – June 23, 2011 – 9:30 A.M.**

MINUTES

VIRGINIA COAL MINE SAFETY BOARD

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Moore
Patti Church
Richard Waddell
Billy J. Powers
Foster Tankersley
Max Kennedy, Jr.
David Berry
Ernest Benko
Harless Mullins
Carroll Dale

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael Skiffington, Program Support Manager, Dept. of Mines Minerals and Energy (DMME)
Sharon Pigeon, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Mike Willis, Division of Mines (DM) Mine Safety Engineer
Matt Smith, DM Coal Mine Technical Specialist
Patty Varner, DM Administrative Program Specialist, Recorder

Meeting Called To Order

Chairman Foster Tankersley called the meeting to order, and welcomed aboard newly-appointed member Carroll Dale and newly-appointed Division of Mines Chief, Randy Moore, and called for a brief background from each member. A roll call of members determined a quorum and that all members were present. Chairman Tankersley and other members commented that this advisory board is one of the best groups with which they have worked, and that the Division of Mines group is one of the most favorable agencies to work with. Chairman Tankersley called for a motion to dispense in reading of minutes from previous meeting on August 19, 2010; a motion was made, seconded with unanimous vote taken.

Overview of Virginia Coal Mine Safety Performance and Current Issues

Randy Moore, DM Chief, looks forward to the Board's advice to the safety program. Mr. Moore's mining experience includes 28 years of varied experience in the mining industry and eight years with DM in the capacities of mine inspector, inspector supervisor and presently, Chief.

Mr. Moore presented a brief overview and update of current status of the safety performance measures and outcomes in Virginia using graphs that reflect numbers and data illustrating production and employees, fatal accidents and serious injuries, roof falls, ignitions and inundations, complaint investigations. The present market for coal demands an amplified focus by DMME and their Boards on safety due to challenges of mining previously-unmined seams and meeting the demand. A shortage exists in our greatest resource in mining, our people, due to retirement of experienced coal miners.

DMME continues to advance and improve the mine mapping system which is key in regulating hazards presented by old mine works and gas wells. Recent near misses – coal mine cutting into gas well, pillar line gassed off, three ignitions, water inundation and hauler fires - were recounted. Board members recommended that the mine employees involved in deflecting the hazards in the near misses be commended at their workplaces by DM. Management of the hazards allows DMME to continue Virginia's good mine safety record attributed to our coal miners, companies, safety personnel and agencies all working together.

Major initiatives for 2011 are replacement of personnel, mine mapping procedures, update of emergency response plans, shift of training activities to the community colleges and new mining laws.

Proposed Changes to Coal Mine Safety Laws of Virginia

Board held brief discussion of proposed changes to Coal Mine Safety Laws of Virginia. The changes will be drafted and comment received at the next Board meeting. Board Members commented that due to voter redistricting, Southwest Virginia will lose representation, and recommended that the Board members, both individually and collectively, make a concerted effort to educate and provide information to new representatives who may be elected that may not have strong ties to the coal industry and coal mining communities.

Period Review of Rules and Regulations under 4 VAC 25

Mike Skiffington, who serves as the Regulatory Coordinator for DMME, led the Board in a review of regulations required by guidelines of the Administrative Process Act Executive Order 14 to retain regulation as is, amend as necessary or repeal if unnecessary on the following:

- 4VAC 25-60 Rules and Regulations Governing the Installation and Use of Automated Temporary Roof Support Systems – Board recommended keeping language as is.
- 4VAC 25-70 Rules and Regulations Governing Disruption of Communication in Mines – Board had no comments.
- 4VAC 25-90 Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of Diesel Powered Equipment in Underground Coal Mines – After discussion of a proposed change to 25-90-60.5., the Board voted to strike the first sentence and in the second sentence strike the phrase “the MSHA engine approval data and”. The last two sentences will remain unchanged.
- 4VAC 25-101 Regulation Governing Vertical Ventilation Holes and Mining Near Gas and Oil Wells – Board recommended to leave as is; no updated required.
- 4VAC 25-110 Rules and Regulations Governing Blasting in Surface Mining Operations – Board had no comments.
- 4VAC 25-120 Rules and Regulations Governing Installation and Use of Cabs and Canopies – Board recommended to leave as is.

Any further comments or recommendations from review from Board members, should be sent to Mike Skiffington and copied to all Members by July 15th.

Mine Safety Awards 2010

Nominations for the Mine Safety Awards for 2010 were reviewed and approved by the Board. Individual nominations included nine miners for 30 years of working with no lost time for injury, 10 with 20 years, and 5 with 10 years. Company nominations included one large underground operation, four large surface operations, three small surface operations, and two small underground operations. MSHA's Denver database confirms the reportable injury rates. The Board recommended that these awards be well publicized.

Open Agenda

Board members recommended that as a group that Frank Linkous be commended by letter or resolution in appreciation of his many efforts and work for mine safety.

❖ **Next Meeting: To be announced at a later date.**

Adjournment

Upon a motion made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Varner
Patty Varner
Secretary